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BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Chair Factory buildings on Cross Street around the turn of the century. The railroad water tower stands at left.

BETHEL'S BRIDGE STREET/CROSS STREET/ RIVERSIDE LANE: A HISTORY

BY PAULINE P. DAVIS

EDITOR'S NOTE: An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the June 6, 1991 Society meeting. It has been edited and updated for this issue.

INTRODUCTION

First, I would like to extend sincere thanks to the staff of Bethel Historical Society: Stan, Randy, Agnes, Millie and Gailey for all their help and patience; to Mary Keniston for showing me how to research deeds, and to the many people who contributed photographs and information regarding the land and buildings to be discussed. Thanks, also, to Louise, Oscar, Bec and Bob for just plain listening.

Historical research for Bridge and Cross streets encompassed the land and buildings of the south side of the Androscoggin River bounded by Mill Brook on the west, the railroad tracks on the south, Alder River bridge to the railroad crossing on the east, and the Androscoggin River on the north, approximately 200-plus acres. This presentation will focus on the backgrounds of the present land and structures bordering Bridge and Cross streets; it will omit names of the many land owners in the remaining areas, but these will become a part of the archives at the Bethel Historical Society. By the way, the oldest structure in existence today

(1993) in this area is the home of Ersel Murphy, which was long owned by the Barker family.

BRIDGE STREET (east side)

Bridge Street runs north and south from the so-called "cloverleaf" to the bridge over the Androscoggin River and is a two-lane, paved way. The original Bridge Street, or "bridle path" (so named because pedestrians or horses and riders were the only users), laid out in 1813, was two rods wide and allowed easier access to Barker's Ferry. First mention of the Ferry was at Town Meeting on March 7, 1803, when ferry privileges were granted against Samuel Barker's place (Ersel Murphy's). The next reference states that in 1810 Samuel Barker was commissioned to operate Barker's Ferry, which for many years was guided across the river by two men using poles and oars. A man and horse were at one time charged eight cents to cross.

However, cries for a bridge were long and loud, and in 1831 the Bethel Bridge Company, a group of Bethel citizens, was incorporated to lay plans for a bridge. The wooden structure was completed and in use by late 1828, but in January 1839 was swept away by a freshet. In April of that year Francis Barker, son of Samuel, conveyed to the Bethel Bridge Company for a toll house a small lot of land on the southerly side of the bridge landing, and the same year the town voted to give Barker's Ferry to the Bethel Bridge Corporation. Records indicate that the ferry was modernized by the use of ropes and a tackle construction thus allowing

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(Streets, continued from page 1)

operation by one man. This method of crossing the river was implemented through February 1869, when a new, wooden 200-foot toll bridge was completed. Designed by Thomas Holt and carefully planned and constructed through the efforts of the Androscoggin Bridge Company (created in 1861), this bridge cost about \$20,000. Tolls were set for a period not exceeding twenty years and Edmund Holt was chosen toll gatherer. A pedestrian was charged two cents, and a horse and rider were charged the sum of eight cents. In the 1870s Clement Seavey Heath was toll gatherer and he resided in the toll house located near the river on the west side of Bridge Street.

One of the greatest pitfalls of a wooden bridge was fire. An article appearing in the *Oxford County Citizen* of June 18, 1920, stated that a "fire at the Bethel toll bridge was quickly put out. The fire was set by a lighted cigar or cigarette thrown out on the bridge." Another article found in the October 24, 1925, issue of the *Citizen* states that "the old toll bridge was nearly burned down. Only quick work by Baker Thurston and Michael Marshall saved it from destruction. It was believed the fire started from a discarded cigar or cigarette stub." Mr. and Mrs. Philip Chapman were the last people to cross the bridge in 1927. They were the parents of Marie Brown and grandparents of Leland Brown. In 1927, a temporary bridge, constructed for use while the new steel bridge was under construction, was swept down the river by extremely high water. The steel bridge remained in use until the present-day concrete structure was completed in 1966.

MURPHY HOUSE - The oldest house in existence in this area, located on the east side of Bridge Street, is currently owned by James and Marjorie Murphy of California and is the home of Ersel Murphy, mother of James. Jim and Marjorie bought the place on October 29, 1984, at which time they gave his parents, R. Glenn ("Pat," who died in 1993) and Ersel the right to live there as long as they wished. The front portion of the house was built about 1806 by Deacon Samuel Barker.

Daniel Clark of Newton, Massachusetts, purchased, on October 6, 1788, from Jonathan Clark, one of the first settlers in Sudbury Canada, two full shares of land in a township granted to Josiah Richardson and his associates in the "County of Cumberland or York." One share represented the large island located in the Androscoggin River, later known as Bond's Island, and the second share was located in Division Thirty-One and had been granted to John Green on the right of William Green, who received the right for his participation in the Narragansett War of 1690. The land, according to ancient records, comprised the entire area east of the present Bridge Street from the river to the present railroad tracks and included all the area contained therein to the location of the present day Alder River bridge.

Records indicate that Daniel Clark built a log house on the premises, where he resided for a short time and then rented it for several years. Leonard Bond Chapman wrote that Parson Caleb Bradley's diary noted visits in December 1798 and again in February 1799 to a Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Patch's house. Mr. Bond located the house "near the bridge where the Barkers have resided a century."

In 1802, Samuel Barker, a Revolutionary War veteran and a tailor (at times he had repaired George Washington's trousers) from Rowley, Massachusetts, bought from Daniel Clark, for \$1,226, several parcels of land and the buildings thereon, located in Sudbury Canada. Deacon Barker moved his family - wife Betsey and 11 children - to the homestead in 1803. Two more children were born to them. Deacon Barker remarried, after his wife died, and fathered two more children, making a total of 15 children. The Congregational minister attempted to coerce Deacon Samuel in the matter of a second marriage by ordering the communion cup to be

withheld. (Since 1982 the Bethel Historical Society has had correspondence from two great-great-grandchildren of Samuel Barker.)

The farm, with additions and subtractions, remained in the Barker family until 1916. Deacon Samuel Barker left his Bridge Street holdings to sons Francis and Moses in the early 1830s. Francis received title to the original home and larger portion of the estate and over the years added many more acres of land. His son Eli inherited the property in April of 1883, with the stipulation that "a chamber be reserved in the house for daughter Kate as long as she remained unmarried." Eli Barker moved a portion of his home (which he built on the Bethel side of the big house) in the early 1880s and attached it to the main building of the original Barker place.

All three Barkers - Samuel, Francis, Eli - were prosperous cattle farmers and commissioned ferrymen who ran Barker's Ferry throughout its existence. Eli's wife, Lydia Burnham Barker, inherited the property; which contained in 1915 the homestead and land on both sides of Bridge Street, one part of Bond's Island and a small island in the river. Lydia Barker sold the entire estate to Lizzie C. Marshall of Milan, New Hampshire, on April 19, 1916. The deed reads "...excepting and reserving the right to use and occupy said premises until Saturday night, April 29, 1916, at six o'clock." By quit claim deed dated April 15, 1941, for "\$1.00 and love and affection," Lizzie Marshall turned over the property to her husband, Michael J. Marshall, who was a logger and trucker, so the land was no longer utilized as a cattle farm. Mrs. Marshall died in 1990.

On July 25, 1944, R. Glenn ("Pat") Murphy, a logger and barber, purchased all the land and buildings thereon. The Murphys - Pat, Ersel and a large, happy family - lived on the premises for forty-seven years, and Ersel Murphy remains there at this writing, (1993). A grandson and family live in a mobile home on the north side of the front lawn.

RED TOP TRUCK STOP is currently owned by Ripley and Fletcher of Norway, Maine, and is leased and operated as a restaurant and filling station by Esther Crockett Wilson. The land was sold to Harold Rolfe by Pat and Ersel Murphy on December 10, 1962. A dispute ensued about whether the land was commercial or residential, but in early 1968 the Town voted it commercial. The same year, Albert ("Bucky") Buck purchased the land and erected a gas station, which he operated for ten years. On February 7, 1978, "Bucky" sold the premises to Dan McGurn and Walter Woodford, who ran the station until February 1984, at which time Dan McGurn became sole owner and a month later sold to Ripley and Fletcher.

TELSTAR VIDEO STORE - owned by Eric and Karen Wight since March 6, 1990, is a section of 2.4 acres of land originally sold by Eli Barker to Edwin C. Rowe in the early 1900s. Between 1908 and the early 1940s the same 2.4 acres were conveyed to Angelia Mason Clark, Fred I. Clark (her son), and Olive Douglass (Richard's mother). On March 13, 1946, Olive Douglass sold the lot to Francis J. Braun of Newry, who planned to erect a hardwood mill, but it never reached fruition. Rodney ("Pick") Eames then bought the land on September 12, 1946, but in July 1947 sold it and a tractor, in order to buy the Bethel Restaurant on Main Street, to J. B. Chapman (Mary Lou Chapman Berry's father). On the same date, J. B. Chapman sold the land to Stanley E. Davis, who then divided the area into four house lots.

The original building of the video store was a cabin belonging to Poplar Tavern in Newry, then owned by Samuel T. Smith (Lucia Smith's father). Robert Keniston bought the structure and later sold it to Stanley Davis, who sectioned it and moved it to the lot next to where Red Top Truck Stop currently is situated. The building was erected and sold to George W. Lothrop on January 6, 1948. The Lothrop's

resided there until July 1958, when they sold to Harold L. and Edith Bean. Mr. Bean was then Bethel's Town Manager. Four years later (July 23, 1962), due to Mr. Bean's appointment as Town Manager of Wilton, Maine, Stanley and Kathleen ("Kitty") Fox purchased the property and several years later added the ever-popular barber shop on the north side of the building (now the video store). Stan was renowned for his fishing and hunting stories, his good humor, and his jovial pranks over the years. After Stan's demise in 1988, Kitty lived there for two years and on March 6, 1990, she sold the property to Eric and Karen Wight. The former barber shop has been remodeled for a video store and the living quarters are rented to Richmond ("Joe") Roderick, former athletic director at Gould Academy.

The FOSTER HOUSE is located on the second lot of the above-mentioned 2.4 acres. Stanley Davis sold a portion of the land to Arthur and Eva Herrick (Barbara Herrick Brown's parents) in September, 1947. Mr. Herrick built the house and they lived in it until 1951. They sold the buildings and land to Bessie Reynolds on October 6, 1952, and she sold to Warren and Nellie Greene of Locust Valley, New York, on October 21, 1959. Ida M. Packard, former Bethel postmaster, acquired the property on June 29, 1960. Perley and Marie Tripp and friend Elizabeth Morse inherited the property in July 1971, and a year later, on July 14, 1972, sold it to Borden and Bertha Foster. Mrs. Foster resides there today.

The GILBERT HOUSE is situated on the third lot of the land purchased by Stanley Davis. The former Middle Intervale School, built in 1899, comprises the main portion of the Gilbert's house. Mr. Davis purchased the school and with the help of James ("Jim") Spinney (Mary Jane Gaudreau's and Leah Deegan's father) moved it to its present location in 1947. Mr. Davis added gables on the roof, enlarged the front windows, attached a garage and finished the interior into adequate living quarters. On December 6, 1949, the house and adjoining lot were bought by Robert and Marie Nichols. Larry and Sandra Smith purchased the property from Marie Nichols (survivor) on January 9, 1970. Larry deeded the place to Sandra in March 1973, and she sold to the present owners, Michael and Linda Gilbert, on June 18, 1974. The Gilberts added a large room on the south side of the house in 1993.

The PAPPAS HOUSE is now owned jointly by Clifford Pappas and Arthur and Joan Pappas. On March 27, 1957, Marie Nichols sold the vacant lot on the Bethel Hill side of her home to Frank Lowell, who built a house on it and sold same to Everett and Doris Chase in August 1957. Kenneth Morgan acquired the premises in June of 1972. After two futile attempts to build a house nearer the river on the opposite side of Bridge Street (one cellar hole still remains at the rear of Bradley and Judith Barker's home), George and Dana Nickerson purchased this real estate on March 25, 1975. They enlarged the house and built greenhouses in the back for their business, known as the Unicorn Flower Shop, which they operated for 11 years. On September 1, 1986, the Nickersons sold the business and house to Lisa Friedlander, who expanded the greenhouses and made cosmetic changes to the house. Lisa operated the shop until 1989 when she sold to the present owners.

PERRY HOUSE - Marguerite Perry bought the premises from Addison ("Sonny") Saunders, Jr. on May 7, 1964. According to John Brown, the original building was a cabin located at the former Kenneth and Elizabeth Wight place in Mayville, now owned by Gloria Wilson.

In the early 1940s Chesley Saunders, owner of Hanover Dowel Company, bought and moved the cabin to the north end of the six-acre lot a short distance from the mill dry sheds. Vervion ("Bunny") and Eva Lapham resided there in the mid-1940s and the Royal Hodsdons (he was former owner of the Thomas LaRue Harness and Repair Shop on upper Main Street from 1941 to 1943) lived there until the

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This Summer the Society revived an old tradition for a superb Fourth of July celebration. As Dr. Moses Mason did over 150 years ago, this year's event featured a speaker, music, and a picnic in his "grove." The Portland Brass Quintet was great. Dr. Ernest Cassara's remarks on the significance of the Declaration of Independence were a fine learning experience. The society plans a repeat of this event for next year's Independence Day.

My term as president is now completed. I have enjoyed the past three years, and have appreciated the opportunity and honor to be the presiding officer of the Bethel Historical Society. Thanks to all members and friends of the Society who have made my tenure such a fulfilling one.

Jane W. Hosterman

early 1960s. Both men were employees at Hanover Dowel Company. On April 12, 1962, "Sonny" and Diane Saunders received the deed for the property. ("Sonny" is the grandson of Chesley Saunders, the late owner of Hanover Dowel Company.) Diane sold the property to Marguerite Perry in 1964. Mrs. Perry died in 1993, and the property is now owned by Richard Douglass. Plans are under way for transfer of this property to Deborah Luxton and her sister to be converted to a beauty shop.

RHEA LU'S CHINA GEM is a Chinese restaurant owned by Rhea Gibbs and Elaine Pitkin since 1992. This property is situated just north of the dry shed lot now owned by the J. A. Thurston Company of Hale, Maine.

On April 16, 1962, Hanover Dowel Company sold the lot to Addison "Sonny" and Diane Saunders. The building was moved to the site from Guy Morgan's store, which was just past the intersection of Railroad, Church and Bridge streets, in the summer of 1962. Harold Rolfe remodeled the old building that same year. The Gem Shop was added at a later date and Diane was given the deed in February 1965. She operated the business until 1990, and her daughter Annmarie inherited the property that same year and sold it in 1992 to the present owners, who converted it to a small Chinese restaurant.

J. A. THURSTON COMPANY LAND - This six-acre lot extends from Rhea Lu's China Gem to Cross Street and originally contained seven dry sheds used by Hanover Dowel Company for many years.

This land belonged to the Barker farm until 1912 when it was sold to Harry Jordan in May of that year. Mr. Jordan sold the land to the Merrill, Springer Company (later Hanover Dowel Company), and the seven dry sheds were added a short time later and existed until 1990.

BRIDGE STREET (west side)

Time permits but a brief sketch of this interesting area which dates back to the original Sudbury Canada land grants similarly described in the description of the Deacon Barker holdings.

Early records are vague, but a deed dated February 23, 1791, states that Jonathan Bartlett sold to John Stearns the 33rd lot on the south side of the Androscoggin River together with all land lying southerly of said lot (this would place the land on the west side of Bridge Street to the railroad tracks). Mention is made that on March 5, 1798 "the schoolhouse for the 'West Parish' to be located near the barn of John Stearns" (this would be near the Village end of the bridge). The school, however, was moved to Bethel Hill three years after its construction.

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SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. These may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents should include 6% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should include \$3 for postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tile	\$3.50
Stationery (package of ten sheets and ten envelopes)	\$2 ea.
Moses Mason House	Bethel Railroad Station
Summer House	Bethel Covered Bridge
Booklets	
"Bethel's Broad Street"	75¢
"The Family Farm"	75¢
"Made in Bethel"	75¢
"Dr. Moses Mason and His House"	\$1
"Molly Ockett"	\$2
Maps and Atlases	
1880 Map of Bethel Hill	\$2
1880 Map of Entire Town (Bethel)	\$2
1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill	\$1
1858 Atlas of Oxford County	\$7.50
Tote Bag (Moses Mason Museum logo)	Sm. \$7.50
	Lg. \$11.50
Placemats, 4 Season (set of four)	\$7.50
Books	
Carrie Wight, A HISTORY OF NEWRY	\$5
Hutchinson, THE RUMFORD FALLS & RANGELEY LAKES RAILROAD	\$20
BETHEL, MAINE CEMETERIES	\$9.50
Russell, INDIAN NEW ENGLAND BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER	\$15.95
N.F. Little, AMERICAN DECORATIVE WALL PAINTING 1700-1850	\$9.95
R. Crosby, FROM AN OLD LEATHER TRUNK	\$5
W.B. Lapham, HISTORY OF WOODSTOCK, MAINE	\$19.95
King, THE WHITE HILLS	\$18
THE WHITE MOUNTAINS: PLACE & PERCEPTIONS	\$9.95
Holt, GRAND TRUNK LINES OF NEW ENGLAND	\$29.95
D.B. Wight, WILD RIVER WILDERNESS	\$4
Francis Parkman, THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY	\$7.50
MAINE IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC	\$29.95
Thomas Hubka, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW ENGLAND	Paper \$22.95 Cloth \$35
Bennett, BETHEL, MAINE: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY	\$39.95
M.F. King, ANNALS OF OXFORD	\$48
R. Crosby, I WAS A SUMMER BOARDER	\$5
A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: CHESTER HARDING AND HIS PORTRAITS	\$25
Paula Wight, NEWRY PROFILES	\$5
Eva Bean, EAST BETHEL ROAD	\$50
R.H. Bennett, OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE	\$18
William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF BETHEL, 1768-1890	\$45
F.W. Kilbourne, CHRONICLES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS	\$20

T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult) (S,M,L,XL)	\$7
Moses Mason Museum (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14)	\$6
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adult) (S,M,L,XL)	\$7
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14)	\$6

Post Cards: Dr. Mason, Agnes Mason,

Moses Mason House	10¢ ea.
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Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totalling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. They will be sent by return mail.

(Streets, continued from page 3)

Research indicates that it was finally resolved in 1806 to buy land for "a Common on which to erect a meetinghouse,"

from John Stearns, whose farm ran along the south bank of the Androscoggin River. This would be a location somewhere at the rear of BRADLEY AND JUDITH BARKER'S HOME, built in 1969 by Frank Lowell and Ernest Blake for Richard and Ruth Verville; it was acquired by the Barkers in 1986. According to records, the West Parish Meeting House was completed in 1808. It was built under the direction of Major Amos Hills, who patterned it after the Cumberland County Court House that stood at the corner of Congress and Myrtle streets in Portland, Maine. The structure was located near where Mill Brook empties into the river. A rooster weathervane atop the roof was shaped by Calvin Twitchell. A boulder in the courtyard was "used by many a swain in helping his betrothed in mounting or dismounting her steed" (an article written in 1909 states the boulder was half embedded in the earth, and in 1993 only a small portion of the top is distinguishable). Services were conducted at the church until 1848 when it was demolished and some of the timbers were used in the construction of the new Second Congregational Church located across the river in Mayville. The carved weathervane was taken down and remained in the Twitchell family for many years, but the whereabouts of it are a mystery at this time (1993). Reverend Charles Frost delivered the last "discourse" in the old meetinghouse on February 7, 1848. The meetinghouse lot was returned to Mr. Stearns in 1849.

The land extending from the river, past Bradley and Judith Barker's land and encompassing the homes on Riverside Lane and perhaps a short distance beyond, was at one time part of the Samuel Barker farm (Ersel Murphy's home) and part of the John Stearn's farm, later belonging to his sons Henry (unmarried), Calvin, and James (who later married Calvin's widow), and hence to Henry's son, Charles H. Stearns. A deed dated March 1842, states that Francis Barker as executor of the last Will and Testament of the deceased Moses Barker (his brother) was to make sale of so much of the real estate as should be necessary to pay the debts, etc. For the sum of \$75.00 sale was made to the Bethel Bridge Company, a group of Bethel citizens, of the land and buildings standing there. A toll house and barn for the use of the bridge toll taker were built soon after that date. An item in the *Oxford Democrat*, dated April 24, 1885, states: "It is rumored that Algernon S. Chapman of the toll bridge will have the town agency to sell rum in all its forms." No other reference was found. Mr. Chapman, prior to his death in 1917, contributed many facts for use by writer Leonard Bond Chapman in his many articles portraying Bethel's history, which were printed in the *Citizen* from 1909 through 1914. Samuel Twitchell bought the former John Stearns farm buildings and four acres of land (abutting the toll house property and extending about where the present Patterson house now stands) of Charles Stearns on February 15, 1887, for the sum of \$925 and sold same to Winnie Durfee (daughter of Algernon Chapman) for \$800 on June 6, 1891. Mrs. Durfee died on January 12, 1897, and all her holdings were added to her brother's estate. Mr. Chapman's unmarried daughter, Angie, inherited the property in 1917 and maintained the residence until 1949. Apparently, Angie did not live there full time, as Arlene Greenleaf Brown remembers that her father and mother, Dr. Sherman and Mabel Greenleaf, lived at the Chapman place during the winter of 1922 and nearly froze. Other renters included Richard and Betty Marshall, Elmer ("Sonny") and Alberta Bean, and Mr. and Mrs. Maddox. Ms. Chapman sold the property (the former toll house) to James and Isabella Logan of Attleboro, Massachusetts, on April 21, 1949, and they sold to Leslie and Mary Corbett on September 12, 1952. Mary Corbett (survivor) sold the land and buildings, and R. Glenn Murphy sold land near the

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BOOK NOTE

Smoke From A Thousand Campfires, by Paul T. Doherty. Gorham, New Hampshire: By the Author, 1992 xi and 441 pps., illus., index, hardcover. \$35. & \$2.50 p/h to the author at Box 281, Gorham, N.H. 03581.

Touching upon a wealth of subjects dealing with the White Mountain region, Paul Doherty's long-awaited autobiography covers the colorful experiences of a man whose career included the roles of Conservation Officer, District Chief, and Director of the N.H. Division of Parks and Recreation. The author of a popular local newspaper column, "The Northwoodsman," Doherty writes in an easy-flowing, informal style that allows him to tell a story and make it believable. In some seventeen chapters, illustrated with a wide variety of fascinating photos, Doherty introduces us to hunters, trappers, and woodsmen that helped lay the foundation for the life he has lived. Although his discussion of local game wardens is of importance, Doherty's encounters with such notables as President Eisenhower, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Sherman Adams, and Joe Dodge will be of much interest to readers. The author also includes information important to an understanding of the White Mountain area in the mid-to-late 20th century - an era that remains essentially untouched by regional historians. Though the book suffers in some sections from the lack of editorial polish, it nevertheless stands as a significant contribution to northern New England historical literature.

THE BETHEL SOLDIERS OF '61

From the pages of the OXFORD COUNTY ADVERTISER, compiled by Judge C.F. Whitman of Norway.

On the 24th of June, the company was mustered into the service as Co. 1 of the Fifth Maine Regt., an organization which was destined before its terms of service should expire, to be again and again under fire, where bullets flew thickest, and the storm of battle raged fiercest, to meet the famous Regt. of the Confederates, to capture more men, guns and flags than it had during the whole term of its service, and to win a fame second to no infantry regiment in that grand old Army of the Potomac whose honor was never tarnished and whose glory shall never fade.

Then stand each citizen of Maine
And raise your cheers on high,
For Col. Edwards and the Fifth
Whose fame shall never die.

Mark H. Dunnell of Portland, once a lawyer in Norway, Capt. of Co. H was commissioned Col. of the Regt., Edwin Illsley of Lewiston, Capt. of E. Lieut. Col. and Sam'l H. Hamilton of Biddeford, Capt. of Co. B. Major. The soldiers of Fifth Maine had been enlisted for three years and two days after being mustered into service they started for Washington. While stopping at Philadelphia for breakfast it was noticed that a number of the men would suddenly leave for places "around the corner" where liquors could be obtained. As it was expected that when they went through Baltimore there would be a fight, it was essential that the soldiers should be in their best fighting trim and free from liquor. It was best too that no needless quarrel should be picked with the mob, which men under the influence of liquor would be very apt to do. Col. Dunnell after conferring with his captains adopted the suggestion of Capt. Edwards, always a staunch temperance man, that when the men were drawn up in line after breakfast, that their haversacks and canteens be examined and what liquor was found spilled. While some evaded this performance of duty, others carried it out. It is needless to say that the originator of the idea thoroughly did his part of the unpleasant business. In this company were several Norway men and among them were two brothers, Rufus and Ephraim Penley. When the latter was searched a bottle of liquor was found which he begged

hard to retain as it had cost him \$2 but all his pleadings were in vain, and it was turned out.

(to be continued in the next issue)



EDNA M. YORK

MEMBER PROFILE

Edna M. York

Edna M. York was born in Lewiston, the daughter of Herbert and Maude Crosse Bean. She attended schools in Albany and Lewiston, graduating from Gould Academy in 1927. Prior to her marriage to Robert S. York in 1930, she taught school in East Bethel. She was a mail carrier during World War II; in 1945-46, she and her husband operated the Bethel Restaurant on Main Street (now the site of the IGA). Mother of five children, she also has seventeen grandchildren and a like number of great-grandchildren. While her husband was a town manager, she lived in a number of communities throughout Maine.

Her retirement years have been spent in Bethel, where she has been a librarian at the Bethel Library for the past decade. She is a member of the Bethel Methodist Church and also attends the Congregational Church in Albany. Active in the Senior Citizens, she was honored by the Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce as an outstanding senior citizen in 1990.

A member of the Bethel Historical Society since 1979, she has served as a guide in the museum, on the Special Projects Committee, and as a pianist at Society functions. She has also been a generous donor to the Society and in 1986 was made an Honorary Member.

Her hobbies include reading and knitting.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Marna McGinniss' name was inadvertently misspelled in the Spring issue. Those wishing to order Nathaniel Tuckerman True's *THE HISTORY OF BETHEL, MAINE* should send their order to Heritage Books, Inc., 1540-E Pointer Ridge Place, Suite 301, Bowie, MD. The price is \$18.50 until 1 March 1994, plus \$3 for shipping. After March 1994, the price will be \$23.50.

SRH

IN MEMORIAM

Died July 8, 1993, Lucia Van Wilson, life member.



SUMMERTIME "FUN" AT THE DR. MOSES MASON HOUSE
Visitors this summer to the Dr. Moses Mason House encountered a number of obstacles due to the sewer and storm drain construction on Broad Street, as this photo so clearly illustrates.

(Streets, continued from page 4)

river to Ernest ("Red") Blake and Frank Lowell, developers, on June 29, 1959. They demolished the Chapman house, graded the land, divided it into house lots and built some of the houses seen today.

RIVERSIDE LANE (north side)

The first house on the right side of Riverside Lane (originally called Blake and Lowell Street) was purchased by Emma Blake Page on September 13, 1963. She lives there at this writing.

The second house was rented to Charles and Charlene Hegsted (Mr. Hegsted was employed at the Satellite Station in Andover) until the summer of 1962; it was sold to Horace Maxcy, Superintendent of Schools, in 1964. Mr. Maxcy sold it to David D. Thompson, retired Gould Academy English instructor, on June 12, 1967, and the present owner, Rebecca Philbrick Kendall, obtained the property of the Bethel Savings Bank (administrator of the estate of Irma Thompson, survivor) in September 1988.

The last house on the west was built by M. Richmond ("Skip") Davis and Edward Daye on land of Mr. Davis and sold to Russell and Sandra Carson on March 20, 1969. Ralph and Beatrice Burris, present residents, bought the property on June 8, 1972. Mr. Burris added a small lot of land, which he obtained from Blake and Lowell that same month.

RIVERSIDE LANE (south side)

Across the street from the Burris home, another Blake and Lowell dwelling was obtained by Bradley and Judith Barker on June 23, 1972. They resided in it until 1986 at which time they sold to Charles and Patricia Blake. The house was completely renovated in the winter of 1991 due to a fire. The Blakes are the current tenants.

On June 4, 1968, Allen and Sandra Messer (he was principal in the Bethel school system) bought the lot situated south of the Blake property and built a house the same year. They sold to David and Carolyn Myers on June 8, 1971, and Raymond and Amy Moran purchased the premises on March 1, 1973. Amy Moran Farrar rented the property to Evanna and Lawrence Grover and Barbara and Nathaniel Craig and sold it to the current owners, George and Sandra Wight, on November 21, 1985. At this time the property is rented and has a realtor's "For Sale" sign on the lawn.

The first place on the left side of Riverside Lane abutting

Bridge Street was sold to Benjamin and Diane ("DeeDee") Kellogg on June 4, 1968. They are the current residents.

On the railroad side of the Kellogg house is an access road to Mill Brook. In the late 1960s Stanley and Susan Moore owned and lived in a mobile home on land given to them by his parents, Roy and Mary Moore. The elder Moores had maintained a camp, which later became a workshop, on this land for some years while they lived in the Village and before moving to Bridge Street. The town attempted to sue Stan and Sue because it claimed the right-of-way was not wide enough for access to a residence. This brought the zoning issue to a head, and by vote of the townspeople was thrown out about 1968. Another mobile home was occupied by two Chase sisters in the late 1970s. Stan and Sue bought the Chase trailer for her mother, Dorothy Durgin, and it burned in 1987. The Moore trailer was sold and moved off the property and the lot conveyed to the Marathon Steel Company, Inc. in June of 1987, and in 1991 became a part of the property sold to Bradley and Judith Barker by the defunct company.

The 1878 bird's eye view of Bethel indicates that the John Stearns house and barn stood somewhere along this area. No photographs were found of these buildings.

The PATTERSON HOUSE was built by George Olson, contractor, in 1982/1983 for Maxie and Barbara Patterson.

Roy Moore sold the land to Thomas Smith on September 30, 1963, and Tom moved a mobile home on to the lot and rented it to Dr. E. Linwood Brown, retired Bethel dentist, on June 24, 1964, and the Pattersons continued on as tenants until the mid-1970s at which time they bought the lot and mobile home. Their new house was completed in 1983, and the mobile home was sold and moved off the lot. Mrs. Patterson inherited the home and resides there at this time.

The HUTCHINS HOUSE - Arthur Herrick purchased the land from Roy and Mary Moore in 1938, built the house and he and Mrs. Herrick moved there from Vernon Street in 1939. They sold this real estate to Samuel T. Smith on November 5, 1952. Lucia Smith, daughter and administrator of the estate of Samuel Smith, deeded it on June 28, 1963, to Dr. E. Linwood Brown, dentist and former owner of Bosserman's Drug Store (now Preb's Pharmacy). Casco Bank, Trustee of the Will of Dr. Brown, conveyed the property to James and Doris Hutchins on February 28, 1968. James (survivor) still owns the property but does not live there nor rent it.

The NAZARENE PARSONAGE, which is currently being refurbished, and the former Richard Douglass home, were both built by Fred I. Clark in the early 1930s. Mr. Clark purchased one lot in May 1929 and the other lot in August 1930. He sold the first house he built to Fred and Olive Douglass in August 1930, and the second house toward the river (now the parsonage) he rented for a number of years. Renters included: Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Pratt, station agent; David and Irma Thompson, English teacher at Gould Academy; and Addison and Emily Saunders, part-owner of Hanover Dowel Company. Roy and Mary Moore were deeded the property in the early 1950s. Their son Stanley inherited the land and buildings after his mother's death in 1973. The house was left vacant for some time and was deeded to the Nazarene Church in the early 1980's

A small house for use by Olive Douglass' parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walker was built by F. J. Clark on the small lot between the Nazarene parsonage and the Douglass' home in the mid-1930s. After the Walkers died, the house was moved to Newry, in the mid-1960s, and the land remained a part of the Douglass property.

BARKER HOUSE - This house was the first place built by Fred Clark and was sold to Fred and Olive Douglass in 1930. A newspaper item of September 22, 1938, states that a storage shed belonging to Eldon Peterkin blew apart and



Bethel postmasters (past and present) gathered at the installation of Norman A. Milliard as postmaster of Bethel on 14 July 1993. From left to right are Gayland Dooen, postmaster 1983-1992, Frank Ettl, officer in charge 1992-93, Nancy Cross, officer in charge (1990), Norman Milliard, postmaster 1993 - , and Earlon Paine, postmaster, 1963-1983. Bethel's first postmaster was Dr. Moses Mason, who served from 1815 to 1833.

damaged the property of Fred Douglass. (Mrs. Peterkin, my grandmother, had a few words with Mrs. Douglass and as a result had storage sheds erected at the very edge of the Douglass' driveway in order to totally block the view toward the Peterkin place on the Village side of the property.) The trailer park plot was added to the property in the late 1940s, and land to Mill Brook encompassing the Fred Gordon field prior to that date. Richard Douglass inherited the land and buildings on the death of his father and over the years made many changes to the house while his family, wife Grace and three sons, lived there. He also added several storage buildings for use in his construction business. On June 17, 1987, he sold the land (including the mobile home park plot) and buildings, except the small lot where his grandparents had lived, to Marathon Steel Company, Inc. who planned to build condominiums on the premises. During the company's ownership the buildings and land remained unchanged and the house was rented several times throughout the next three and one-half years. Bradley and Judith Barker then bought the property through a foreclosure sale on January 5, 1991. The Barkers renovated the house and rented to Debbie DeJulio and Chris and Kim Moretto (current residents).

BARKER TRAILER PARK - In 1993 there are five mobile homes in the park. Somewhere near the railroad side of the mobile home park Fred Gordon maintained a right-of-way to his meadow for many years. During the early 1940s Frank Boyker owned a small camp a short distance in on the right-of-way. Mr. Boyker peddled meat and eggs throughout the area. An item in the August 27, 1942, *Bethel Citizen* notes that Frank Boyker and Durward Mason were injured when Boyker's meat truck driven by Mason overturned after a blowout. The camp was torn down by the Douglasses in the late 1940s.

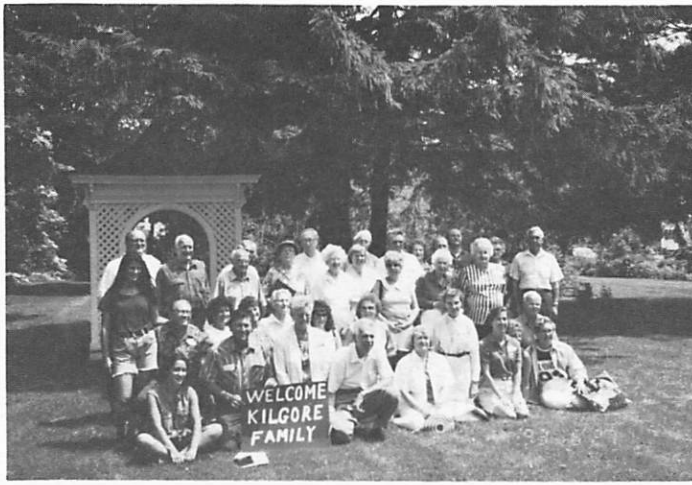
The **BOTTLE & BAG** store opened in 1993. A house existed on this property until the winter of 1992. This building was erected during the fall of 1932 on land belonging to the Peterkin farm, which at one time was part of the James C. Stearns farm. On August 3, 1934, the property was deeded by Etta Peterkin to her daughter, Marion W. Philbrick (later Kimball), Rebecca Kendall's and my mother. On September 11, 1935, shortly after divorcing my father, Marshus Philbrick, Mother deeded the land and buildings to Mildred Garroway, who rented to Gilbert and Esther Lapham Brown, Wilbur and Verna Thompson Sweetser, and to her

daughter and son-in-law, Donald and Marion O'Brien. An apartment was made in the upstairs rooms of the house, in which Mrs. Garroway lived prior to selling to Roderick ("Mush") McMillin on June 5, 1951. "Mush" bought the place for his mother, Virgie, who lived there until about 1970. A short time after Mush died, Pearlina, his widow, sold the property (September 2, 1971) to Eugene and Eunice Roy, and they lived there until it burned in the winter of 1992. The remaining structure was leveled and graded and was sold to Roberta Taylor in the summer of 1992. Two sections of the current store were placed on the property that year, but the two-story building was not completed until the fall of 1993.

The 1878 bird's eye view of Bethel places the James C. Stearns farm somewhere in the vicinity of the Bottle & Bag store. No photos were found, however. A *Citizen* item, dated June 13, 1900, states that the "unoccupied house owned by Roscoe A. Fifield of Methuen, Massachusetts, known as the J. C. Stearns place, was burned." The house burned flat but the barn was saved. Arson was suspected, and a reward of \$50 was offered for anyone with knowledge of the person or persons involved. A later item alludes to the old cellar hole of the J. C. Stearns place.

U. S. FOREST SERVICE - An 1872 deed states that Eben S. Kilborn's land was seized by Charles Merrill, and a deed dated November 11, 1874, states that Charles C. Merrill sold to Samuel S. Dunn the premises in which he lived. Samuel Dunn operated Dunn's Carriage Shop, a small building on the north side of the house. Mr. Dunn died in 1876, and his property was left to his wife, Cyrene Browne, who sold the premises to Thomas B. Kendall in the late 1880s. Mr. Kendall was a mason, plasterer, and owner of many riding houses of excellent breed. He also owned property on Summer Street, where it is assumed he lived. An item in the April 2, 1902, *Democrat* stated that Will and Daisy Bryant had moved into Thomas Kendall's house on Church Street (actually Bridge Street). Will Bryant's grandson, Richard Bryant, confirmed this and reported that his father, Myron Bryant, was born in the house in 1902. Mr. Kendall sold the house to my grandmother, Etta M. Wilson (later Peterkin), on July 9, 1904. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wilson, their two-year-old daughter Marion, and Joseph Sanborn (my great-grandfather) moved from Shelburne, New Hampshire, that summer. Mr. Wilson died of pneumonia in 1908 and Mrs. Wilson supported the family by taking in boarders, one of which must have been Eldon Peterkin, a logger whom she married in 1913. They added many acres of land, enlarged the house, and built a 100-foot barn, silo and many storage sheds for farm and logging equipment storage during the 1920s. They raised acres of fodder corn and potatoes, maintained a herd of fifty to sixty milk cows, peddled milk, butter, and eggs by horse and wagon (milk was eight cents per quart in 1932), filled the barn with hay cut from their meadows on Vernon Street, Cross Street and the farm, kept eight to ten teams of work horses for the logging operations, to name only a few. A herdsman, Reuben Canwell, who was hired in 1934 and stayed on and worked winters as a teamster in the woods, remained on the farm as a boarder after Mr. Peterkin died in December 1940. He kept two or three cows and worked at Hanover Dowel Company. Every so often "Rube" would go on a "bender" drinking checkerberry, rubbing alcohol, vanilla - anything with alcohol - for a week or more; Chesley Saunders would help me feed and milk the cows. Rube paid board to my grandmother so I could finish (in 1943-1945) my junior and senior years at Gould Academy. During the 1940s, Mrs. Peterkin sold all the intervals, many acres of land in South Bridgton, and the logging equipment, etc., and the buildings gradually deteriorated. Mrs. Peterkin died in a nursing home in South Bridgton on May 13, 1955, and her daughter, Marion Wilson Philbrick Kimball, inherited the property

(continued on page 8)



A special family reunion was held in June for the Kilgore family at the Dr. Moses Mason House. Members of the family came from many parts of the United States to celebrate their ties to John Kilgore, one of Bethel's first selectmen.

(Streets, continued from page 7)

and rented the house to Bessie Martin from 1954 to 1962. It was sold to Maurice and Rebecca Philbrick Kendall on November 30, 1955. Maurice Kendall, Raymond Bennett, and Kenneth Lovejoy demolished the buildings (Raymond was severely injured while tearing down the barn), and the Kendalls sold the land to the U. S. Forest Service on December 22, 1964. The U. S. Forest Service complex is an asset to this area.

JAMES AND BEATRICE BROWN LAND - Only a storage shed, a beautiful garden, and cultivated raspberry and blackberry plants remain here in 1993.

First mention of this property was in 1829 when one acre of land was sold by Henry and James Stearns, heirs of John Stearns, to Asa Rowe for \$75. No record was found of when the house was erected. The deeds from this date through 1858 stipulated that the property must be enclosed by a fence. The same one-acre description is contained in a deed from Asa Rowe to John Russell, dated April 8, 1837. Deeds found for the same one-acre lot with buildings thereon were as follows: July 18, 1856, Robert Wiley to Henry McLaughlin (listed on 1858 map); January 9, 1858, Henry McLaughlin to Jacob Holt (no further mention was found regarding transactions by either McLaughlin or Holt); September 5, 1860, Robert Wiley to Lucy Ann C. Crop; November 29, 1865, Wellington R. Crop to Hamlin D. Roach; July 27, 1866, Hamlin Roach to Archibald W. Cole and Tyler T. Cole; January 26, 1872, Relief Merrill purchased the property; October 1, 1887, Relief E. Merrill deeded it to her daughter Mary Ann Merrill McCloskey with the stipulation that she be allowed to live there for the rest of her normal life, rent free; January 20, 1892, Mary A. Merrill McCloskey to Georgiana Smith (wife of Ahira Smith and mother of Daniel Smith); July 2, 1922, Burton Smith, Cora Smith and Ruby Smith, (heirs of Georgiana Smith) to Daniel Smith (brother).

Daniel Smith rented the property from 1922 through 1946. Some of the families renting the property were: Marshus and Marion Philbrick (Rebecca Kendall's and my parents; Rebecca was born in the house); Ardell Hinckley, his parents and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Appleby; and Roland and Jeanie Annis ("Oscar" Annis' parents). James and Beatrice Brown bought the property on February 8, 1946, and lived there until November 11, 1961, when they were required by the State of Maine to make other living arrangements. In 1961, the State, by eminent domain, took the house and part of the front portion of land to be used in

part for construction of the new cloverleaf rotary over the railroad tracks, completed in 1963, thus replacing the old overhead bridge and dangerous intersection. The Browns were told they could not re-position the house and were allowed just three months to find a place to live. Leonard Kimball purchased the house as a rental facility in the spring of 1962 and had it moved to the second lot past the Alice Kimball/David Salway home across from the Albany end of Songo Pond. Renters were Leonard's sister, Jennie Truman and the Clifford Hill family. The house burned in 1981. The land next to this house and to the tracks saw many owners too numerous to name and at present is used for a garden by current owner James Brown.

CROSS STREET (south side)

Cross Street was constructed in 1921 and called the Chair Factory Road or Mill Street until the early 1940s. Developer Heinie Merrill, an owner of The Sunday River Brewing Company located at the intersection of Route 2 and 26 and the Sunday River Road, presented, in 1993, proposals for the relocation of Cross Street and construction of an industrial park and hotel at the Bridge Street entrance.

J. A. THURSTON COMPANY LAND AND STRUCTURES - Located at the corner of Cross and Bridge streets and bounded on the south by the railroad tracks and on the west by the old "cider mill," this now vacant lot contained Hanover Dowel Company until May 1993 when the mill was razed and burned. An old garage is the only building existing on this property.

In the early 19th century this land was part of the Samuel Barker farm and saw many owners and divisions after Francis Barker died in 1883. Copies of several deeds to this property are filed at the Bethel Historical Society.

A *Bethel Citizen* item of September 1906 states that Nelson Springer announced he would build a new spool mill and electric plant near the overhead bridge on land owned by Edwin C. Rowe. The land was deeded by Mr. Rowe to Mr. Springer on October 17, 1906. The mill was constructed and in full operation by the summer of 1907. According to a *Citizen* item dated March 25, 1908, "The N. R. Springer Novelty Mill was totally destroyed in a fire. A town meeting was called to decide whether to exempt the property from taxes for a 10-year period if he builds a new factory on it. This would determine his rebuilding." The property was exempted in April 1908. Another item which appeared in the *Citizen* of April 8, 1908, noted that "N. R. Springer announced plans for a new brick mill at West Bethel and a finishing mill at Bethel. The new mills to open July 1908." Mr. Springer also announced his plans to install a new light plant for electric lighting behind the mill. The new mill was finished on October 22, 1908. It had a fireproof, cement engine house for the 100-horsepower engine which drove the machinery. Nelson Springer sold his interest in the Merrill, Springer Company and the Bethel Light Company to N. S. Stowell Company and the J. P. Coats interests, according to an item in the July 1, 1920 *Citizen*. An August 18, 1932 item states that "additional storage space for spool blocks was under construction at the N. S. Stowell & Company mill." The structure was located on the roof of the main building. Another item on September 15, 1932, reads that "the storehouse of the Stowell plant at North Anson was moved to Bethel and erected on land adjoining the west end of the Bethel plant. N. S. Stowell & Company merged to become Stowell-MacGregor Company." In October of 1932 the mill was operating fifteen hours a day. In the October 10, 1935 *Citizen*, it was noted that the Stowell-MacGregor Corporation mill would shut down indefinitely starting October 25. Between forty and seventy-five employees lost jobs. In February 1936, local businessmen met at the Legion to discuss ways to bring more business to Bethel; Hugh Thurston was elected chairman and Gerard Williams was appointed secretary. On January 26, 1940, the Stowell-

MacGregor Company sold the property, now containing three parcels, to Hanover Dowel Company of Hanover, Maine. The original Hanover Dowel company, situated in Hanover, burned on November 25, 1939. Officers appointed were: Chesley Saunders, president; Addison Saunders, vice president; Addie Saunders, secretary-clerk. Wallace Saunders, a school teacher, joined the company in the mid-1940s. The office area in the main section of the mill was converted to an apartment (whether before the Saunders family bought it or shortly thereafter is not known at this time). Sue Clement Farrar taught dancing in a room near the apartment. Vervion ("Bunny") and Eva Lapham lived there in 1940 and Addison and Emily Saunders were there until it was converted to offices some time in the mid-1940s. Addison and Wallace, sons and heirs of Chesley and Addie Saunders, operated the mill through the late 1950s when Wallace became the sole owner. Wallace and Frances Saunders' son Robert entered partnership with his father in the mid-1970s and took over the operation early in 1981 at which time his father retired. Robert owned and operated the mill until its sale to J. A. Thurston Company of Hale, Maine, on February 16, 1988.

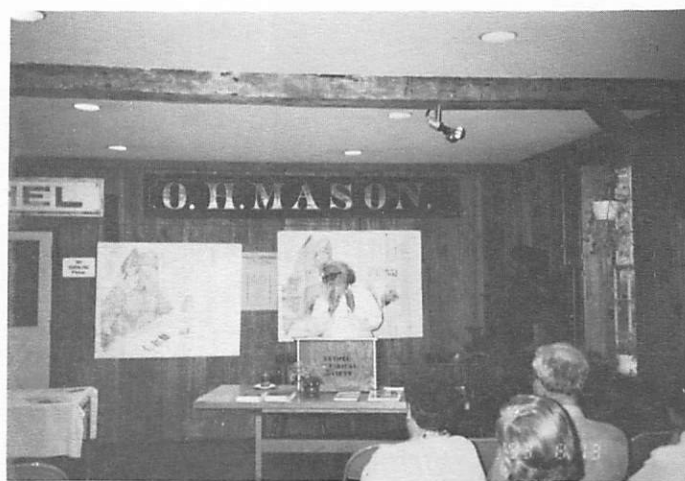
CIDER MILL - The now vacant cider mill building, adjacent to and east of the J. A. Thurston Company property, was deeded, in August 1961, to Ernest Angevine by Henry H. Hastings, Executor of the estate of James A. Wiles.

The original land transfer was made by Eli Barker to Andrew J. Haskell on November 20, 1894. Very little was recorded regarding this establishment. On October 16, 1884, the *Oxford Democrat* reported that "the cider mill near the corn factory is running full blast. A hydraulic press capable of exerting a pressure of 20,000 pounds is now used. Piping is completed for the evaporator that will handle over 40 bushels of apples a day." A *Citizen* item of October 16, 1895, stated that 500 gallons of cider were being produced. The price was 10 cents a gallon. Apples sold at 12 cents a bushel and the cider cost one and one-half cents per gallon when people provided their own apples. Apparently, Jim Wiles, who lived at the rear of the mill, added a sawmill prior to 1920. A *Citizen* advertisement of December 16, 1920, stated: "Custom Shingle Sawing - James Wiles." Another ad on February 4, 1926, read: "Wood sawed - James Wiles." Winters during the 1930s Jim worked as a logger in various lumber camps built and operated by Eldon Peterkin. It is not known when Jim ceased operations at the Cider Mill. He died at the DesRoches Nursing Home in 1961.

SUNDAY RIVER TRAIN PLATFORM - Sunday River Ski Resort built platforms and ramps for the debarking of passengers from its new "Silver Bullet" passenger train, a little to the rear of the cider mill on land owned by the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad. The train was expected to be put into service on December 26, 1993.

DANIEL DAVIS LAND AND BUILDINGS - Just past the cider mill toward the mini mall on Route 26 one will observe two cement block buildings, an old large, red three-story building, and a modern car wash facility.

A corn shop existed on the Bridge Street end of this property in the 1890s. It was an enterprise owned and leased by the Town of Bethel. Following are items from the *Oxford Democrat* and *Citizen*; March 4, 1890 - "Wyman Brothers will build a new corn canning factory in the spring."; March 11, 1890 - "Several carloads of lumber have been landed on the site of the new corn shop and work has begun as far as the building."; March 25, 1890 - "The Wyman Bros. have erected an ice house for the purpose of storing ice."; September 22, 1891 - "The corn factory is putting up 33,000 cans of first-quality corn daily."; May 28, 1896 - "The corn factory will take all the lima beans the farmers will raise."; July 30, 1898 - "The corn shop has been open the past week for the canning of beans, but will open



Dr. David C. Smith, Bird Professor of History at the University of Maine (Orono), gave the second annual Hall Memorial Lecture as the first event of the Society's 14th annual Sudbury Canada Days. Professor Smith's lecture was titled, "The Main Themes of Maine History."

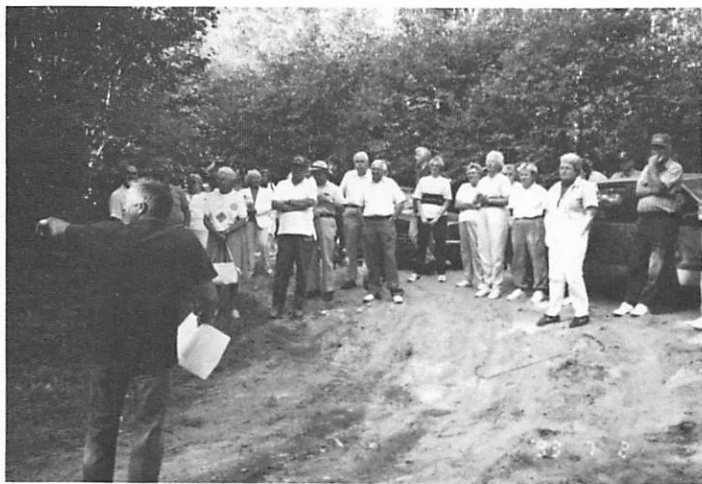
for the canning of corn Monday, August 19. 200,000 cans of beans and succotash were canned."; August 17, 1898 - "A new husking shed was built at the corn shop."; November 15, 1898 - "A labeling machine has been placed in the factory which has reopened for the manufacturing of cans under the supervision of Mr. Charles Chute."; May 9, 1902 - "H. F. Webb and Company were given a contract to run the corn shop."; October 13, 1903 - "Part of the corn was put into gallon cans for the first time."; September 30, 1909 - "H. F. Webb and Bethel representative Whitman are finishing their 7th year in charge of the corn shop."; April 5, 1917 - "Fritz J. Tyler made arrangements to start up the corn shop in the fall, Burnham and Morrill Company will be the backers."; March 28, 1918 - "Fritz Tyler sold the blacksmithing and carriage making business and is going into making corn packing cases." (In the early 1920s Fritz Tyler bought out the Burnham and Morrill corn business and continued operating the corn factory through 1927, and the box factory until it was destroyed by fire on November 23, 1946.); May 5, 1927 - "Fritz Tyler announced the corn factory would not open due to conditions of the market." (In 1932 Fritz Tyler moved one of the corn shop buildings to be used in the construction of the building housing the Backstage Restaurant on Summer Street.); April 15, 1943 - "A grass fire was set by a passing locomotive at Fritz Tyler's box factory. The crew at Hanover Dowel were able to put out the fire."; April 20, 1943 - "The Box Factory/Novelty Mill was moved to John Harrington's on Summer Street."

In 1944, Leslie E. Davis rented from Fritz Tyler the easterly end of the corn canning establishment for a planer mill (his mill in Newry had been destroyed by fire). On December 1, 1945, he leased the operation of the planer mill to Wade Thurston. A *Citizen* news item of November 28, 1946, states that "A fire on November 23 destroyed the novelty mill, former corn shop of Fritz Tyler, Leslie Davis' planer mill and the quarters housing the Cross Street road equipment belonging to the Town of Bethel. Mr. Davis plans to rebuild."

Mr. Davis then bought the two-acre lot from Fritz Tyler. A new planer mill, made of cement blocks with a steel roof, was built and operating by February 23, 1947 (this mill still stands).

On July 2, 1951, the L. E. Davis Lumber Company was formed and son Richard became the president and general manager in 1958, and his son took over in the early 1980's. This property contained the BETHEL CHAIR FACTORY in the mid-1880s. First mention of this enterprise was found

(continued on page 10)



Richard Grover of Mason (foreground) points to another house site during the 1993 Bethel Historical Society picnic which featured a tour of the town named for Dr. Mason in 1843, 150 years ago this year.

(Streets, continued from page 9)

in the *Oxford Democrat* of July 14, 1886, and included the following: "At a recent meeting in Bethel it was a unanimous vote to appropriate \$5,000 for the building of a factory 120' x 38', two stories and a basement, to be leased to J. H. Barrows, at 7% per annum for the manufacture of Shaker chairs." In November of that year the town "voted to raise an additional \$3,000 to purchase an engine, boiler and machinery for the new chair factory." The company flourished during the years 1887 to June of 1898. A new line of dining chairs, a full line of chamber sets, and extension and faculty tables in oak were added by 1893, and a southern market explored. Each year in August the employees went on an excursion to Portland and the harbor islands. In February 1897 the chair factory removed its stock and salesroom to the "rink" on the Hill. By June 1898 the company, somewhat affected by the war, had reduced its crew considerably. Meetings were held to discuss reorganization and to raise capital for a new finishing building. Funding was procured, and the two-story finishing building, currently in existence, was erected in the spring of 1899. (There has been talk of preserving this historic structure, which is Bethel's oldest industrial building.) But in October 1898 for the benefit of its creditors, Samuel Twitchell, president of Bethel Savings Bank, was appointed to look into a quick sale of the property. One item mentions the factory was recovering from the blow it received by the fire of 1898 which destroyed the Main Street salesroom and finishing shop. E. L. Tebbets of Locke Mills was assigned agent and general manager.

On December 4, 1900, the town deeded the Bethel Chair Factory to the Bethel Manufacturing Company, of which William H. Winslow was a major stockholder. In January 1901, a whistle was added and land purchased from Fred Gordon and the Grand Trunk Railway. In November 1901 it was mentioned that the company was doing a brisk business on Christmas orders, that the men were working nights, that two acres of land had been added from the Gordon heirs, and that extensive repairs were made on the buildings. The Bethel Manufacturing Company closed on January 19, 1908. Portland interests took over complete control of the company after successfully easing out the Bethel stockholders. It reopened on February 4 that same year. The company, however, went bankrupt in 1912. Charles A. Douglass and Mrs. Newell Godwin bought the property from the bankruptcy trustees and renovated it so it could be operated.

Howard Thurston purchased the factory and land from C. A. Douglass on February 16, 1916, following the fire which destroyed his dowel mill in Newry. Mr. Thurston, with his son Hugh, operated the spool mill for thirty years. At some time in the 1930s three apartments were constructed in the finishing building (still standing and owned by Daniel Davis), two on the second floor and one on the mill side of the first floor opposite the finishing room. Gordon and Flo Merrill and family and the Augustus Gallant family lived on the second floor, and Ted and Alice Gallant and family lived on the first floor. The three men worked in the mill. The mill burned on October 18, 1944. Charles E. Merrill bought the land in 1945, and Richard Davis purchased same for a mill yard in 1948. Daniel Davis opened an electronic car wash on this property in the winter of 1993.

MINI MALL (intersection of Cross Street and Route 26)

A. Dan Forbes sold the land to Bennett's Garage on September 4, 1954, as space for a parking lot for storage of their new and used vehicles for sale. They sold the land to Harold, Laurel and Floyd Jones of Windham, Maine, in 1976. This swampy area was filled in, and soon after contractors constructed a mini mall consisting of several possible business spaces. Renters have been: Dick and Sheila Waterhouse for a cheese shop; Jeff Prest for a Radio Shack; Dick Thompson for a car parts store, a furniture store and a shoe store; Albert Buck for a Western Auto Store; Cisco and Poncho's, a Mexican restaurant; the Bethel Chamber of Commerce; Al Carson, accountant; Wendy Penley, Mahoosuc Realty, and Port Sports. Cisco and Poncho's expanded their restaurant in late 1992 and now share the building only with Port Sports.

JAVA HOUSE is located beside the railroad tracks in the house formerly owned by Frank Lowell.

Research did not reveal a time when the house was built or who lived in it prior to the early 1900s. However, the 1858 map of Bethel shows that a T. Kimball owned buildings and property situated on the right side of the road just beyond the railroad station. The map locates the road very close to and at the east end of the railroad station. Possibly it is the same place.

The 1880 map shows that Dr. D. W. Gordon, who then lived in the present Samuel and Natalie Timberlake place on Church Street, owned the property. Dr. Gordon was the father of Fred and Addie Gordon, mentioned earlier in this report. Apparently, the house was rented, possibly to station agents, through 1901 when it was sold to William Winslow of the Bethel Manufacturing Company for use by mill employees. The Heath family resided there in 1911. This house has withstood many floods over the years, even as recent as 1987.

William Winslow sold the house and land to Howard Thurston on March 15, 1917. Mr. Thurston also used it as a residence for the mill employees. Only two tenants are known at this time: Augustus Gallant and family, and Herbertina and Maurice Brooks - the Gallants for many years and Brooks for one year during 1943-1944. Hugh Thurston, heir and son of Howard Thurston, sold the property to Harry H. Brown on April 8, 1946, and Mr. Brown sold to A. D. and Lola Forbes on September 10, 1946. The place was transferred by Mrs. Forbes (survivor) to her daughter and son-in-law Frank and Beatrice Lowell in the early 1980s. On May 7, 1985, they transferred the property to their son Frank Lowell, Jr., subject to the right of Lola Forbes to occupy the premises with the grantee for life. Frank remodeled and modernized the house and erected a garage and sold it in 1992 to Carl Hansen, current owner of the Java House. The Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce rented the front portion of the house until 1993 when they moved to the former Martha's Restaurant building on Main Street. Mr. Hansen quickly remodeled the front portion of



Society member Warren Stearns (left), Selectman of Hanover for over thirty years, poses beside the portrait of Phineas Howard (1771-1851), Hanover proprietor, with Ann Hastings Morton, who presented a brief history of Hanover at the June monthly meeting of the Society. Hanover was incorporated in 1843, 150 years ago this year.

the place to accommodate a dining room for the Java House. Mrs. Hansen maintains a sewing shop in the former Lowell garage at the back of the property.

CROSS STREET (north side)

DAVIS GARAGE - The land and buildings on the north side of Cross Street, from the intersection of Route 26 to Western Maine Lumber Company on the west and the Androscoggin River on the north, are owned by Daniel Davis and contain a garage and an office building.

Mention should be made here that in September 1944 Warren Blake purchased from Asa Sessions a lot near the corner of the present Western Maine Supply Company on land owned by L. E. Davis Lumber Company, and opposite the Fritz Tyler property on Cross Street. The same year he erected a building for a garage and welding business. The structure was destroyed by fire on February 5, 1947. Loss was estimated at \$8,000.

Richard Davis bought from Eldon Peterkin in 1947 the large field described above. He built a sawmill near the river and the channel of Alder River, and this mill was in operation by 1948. This enterprise was flooded many times over the years. A new and more modern mill was built on higher ground a little behind the L. E. Davis Lumber Company office in 1978. The old mill by the river was dismantled by Robert Davis and others for the lumber it contained.

Following the death of Leslie Davis in 1961, Richard acquired his father's company on the opposite side of Cross Street, which he combined with his existing sawmill business. The Davis' office building was originally a stable for the Thurston mill horses. It was renovated and utilized as an office for the L. E. Davis Lumber Company in 1959 and remains a property of Daniel Davis. The large garage on the Route 26 side of the office building was built by Aubrey Daye in 1988.

WESTERN MAINE SUPPLY COMPANY - In 1966 and 1967 Frank Lowell, Sr., obtained four lots of land, some with buildings thereon, on Lincoln and Cross streets for the purpose of re-establishing and relocating his lumber and supply business then occupying the building of the present Backstage Restaurant. The four lots are described as follows:

1. Raymond Chapman lot - Mr. Lowell traded a house in Gilead for the Chapman property on August 5, 1966.
2. Lot belonging to the inhabitants of the Town of Bethel deeded on June 7, 1967.

3. Ivory Currier lot - (see below)

4. Van Tel and Tel Company lot was purchased on September 29, 1967. GTE owns a building and right-of-way near this lot.

The deed states: excepting and reserving from this conveyance a parcel of land conveyed by Lowell to Ivory Currier, a parcel to the Van Tel and Tel Company and the right-of-way over and across Lincoln Street which lies at the Bridge Street end of the land. All existing structures were torn down and a mobile home put on the lot conveyed to Ivory Currier. The original store was erected in 1967. The property has seen considerable expansion and change during the past twenty-four years. Frank and Beatrice Lowell's two sons, Frank Jr. and Robert, are the current owners of this enterprise.

LINCOLN STREET was formerly called the "Jungle."

Eli Barker, in 1908, 1909, and 1910 sold three parcels of land to Ellis Annis (Oscar's grandfather, who lived on Railroad Street). Mr. Annis cleared the land and sold one lot to a Mr. Collier, who built a house (little was found about this place). Frank Chapman and family resided in the house from the mid-1920s until it burned, along with all the Chapman family belongings, in February of 1930.

Mr. Annis sold the second lot to H. Met and Nancy Osgood on April 1, 1924, and the third lot went to John X. Bennett, who built a small house on it and then sold to the Osgoods in 1925. Mr. Osgood deeded the original lot with buildings to Ellis Annis in 1926 and moved into the smaller home, which was apparently torn down, though information is inconclusive. Roland Annis, survivor and son of Ellis Annis, sold the original Osgood premises to Elizabeth Griffin (Frank and J. B. Chapman's mother and owner of Duck Inn, now Mother's) on February 17, 1930. In 1933, Mrs. Griffin sold the property to Archie Cole and he deeded it to Newell Godwin in 1934. Etta Godwin (survivor), former owner of the Bethel Manufacturing Company, rented the house to Ola Olson for several years and then sold it to Frank P. Chapman in 1942. This place was deeded to Raymond, a son, prior to Frank's death in 1969. Judith Currier Barker, a granddaughter of Frank Chapman, remembers as a child four houses at the end of Lincoln Street. Frank and Gladys Spinney Chapman had six children; she died in 1929 and Mr. Chapman married a woman with nine children.

STONE HOUSE - This house was originally the office of Leslie Davis and was situated across the street from its present location. Richard Sweetser purchased the land in January 1947 from Asa Sessions, and the building was moved onto the site the same year. Title to the property was transferred to Isabelle Stone, Richard's sister, on January 15, 1949. Several additions have been added throughout the years.

(to be continued in next issue)

REFLECTIONS OF A HALF CENTURY

(continued from the last issue)

by Leslie E. Davis

For the hauling job on the spruce pulp at Grafton in 1935, I bought a Catapillar RD 4 tractor from the Baskahegan Lumber Co. at Danforth, Maine. They were closing out their operations at Danforth and I bought the tractor for \$1200, and George Parsons and I brought it to Bethel on one of my trucks. This was a good tractor and a real bargain. I also bought an old Catapillar Model 30 tractor from the town of Old Orchard for \$300. The tractor was in pretty good shape, but was too narrow gauge for woods work and we tipped it over three or four times that winter.

(continued on page 12)

(Memoirs, continued from page 11)

Clayton Mills and Hoyt Gunther drove the Model 30 gasoline tractor and George Parsons drove the RD 4 Diesel tractor.

In the winter of 1936 and 1937, we cleaned up the pulp job in Grafton and we also started our first pine cutting operation in the Rapid River area. The first winter I bought from the Brown Company all the pine stumpage in the Sunday Pond Brook watershed area, and moved hay, grain, and supplies into a camp that was at the foot of the carry road at the upper end of Sunday Cove by trucking ice up the Umbagog Lake during the week of December 25, 1936 to January 1, 1937. I sent Linwood Lowell in to look after this job and his wife, Mildred, did the cooking. This was a small job of about 250 thousand board feet, so we had only four horses on this job and a small cutting crew. They landed logs in a boom in Sunday Cove.

We were able to drive up the lake on the ice about all winter to look after this job.

In the spring of 1937, I took another pulp job of the Brown Co. on their land in Bethel known as the Hall lot which is on the south side of the road to the old Osgood place. This was a peeling job during the peeling season and we cut the balance as rough pulp to clean it up. The Brown Co. cruiser estimated 325 cords on this job and we cut over 1600 cords on the lot. We trucked this pulpwood to Berlin during that summer and fall. This was a very good job and we did well on it.

(to be continued in the next issue)

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Keith and Suzanne Bartlett, Bethel
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Music by the Portland Brass Quintet was featured at a Fourth of July Picnic held on the back lawn of the Dr. Moses Mason House. The Quintet's appearance was sponsored in part by a grant from the Maine Arts Commission. This community picnic restored a tradition begun by Dr. Moses Mason in the 1850s.

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